

tell the former President “enough”? “no more”? “you have gone too far”? “this must stop”?

You were all here on January 6, as I was. You know those Capitol Police and Metropolitan Police risked their lives to defend you and me. Will you now defend them when they are being smeared so scandalously?

We are here on a Sunday, working to pass a historic bipartisan plan to build the backbone of a strong 21st century economy that benefits all Americans. Can't we also have a bipartisan backbone to defend the men and women who defended the Capitol on January 6?

A few minutes ago, I walked into the building. They were there. You know they are going to be there to protect you, the men and women of the Capitol Police. Theirs is a dangerous job now, more dangerous because of January 6. We salute them for their bravery, and those who have questioned that bravery have really gone too far.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on another topic, the most frustrating aspect of America's COVID response isn't that we are being asked to wear masks again—I have my mask here—in COVID hotspots; the most maddening part of this pandemic is that Americans could have put this virus in their rearview mirror long ago.

We could have saved thousands of lives. Over 600,000 Americans are dead from COVID-19. We could have prevented a great deal of the economic pain this pandemic has inflicted on America's families and businesses. We are here now, battling a new surge and a more dangerous strain of coronavirus, in large part, because the people with big megaphones chose, cynically and cowardly and cruelly, to spread doubt and denial about this virus and the vaccines that prevent it. Their lies cost lives.

Fortunately, this past week seems to mark a turning point for America. Leaders in both the public and private sectors are stepping up for the common good and requiring their workers to get vaccinated or to get tested regularly to show they are not sick and not a danger to others. If you want the job, get the jab. It is time.

President Biden also announced that all Federal workers must get vaccinated or tested. I commend his decision. That is leadership, and it will save lives.

And to some who come to the floor of the Senate and to other places to say that the government should operate more like a business, take note: Some of the most innovative employers—Google, Netflix, Disney—have also announced that their workers will have to be vaccinated, and there will be more.

Recently, several of our Republican colleagues took to the floor of the Senate. They even invited over their fan club from the House. They lined up

right behind the speakers over on the Republican side of the aisle. And they are very strong in their feelings that the Speaker of the House should not require Members to wear masks.

Well, there is a reason for it, and the suggestion that the CDC has flip-flopped or that Dr. Fauci has flip-flopped belies the reality that the virus has flip-flopped. We are now dealing with something known as a Delta variant.

There is an urgent message for all Americans who have not been vaccinated: While you have been avoiding vaccination or waiting for just the right moment, the enemy—the COVID-19 virus—has not been idle. The Delta variant has arrived in a big and deadly way.

Here is what Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the Director of the CDC, said:

The Delta variant is more aggressive . . . more [transferable] than previously circulating strains. It is one of the most infectious respiratory [viruses] we know of . . . in my 20-year career.

Now, in case you dismiss Dr. Walensky as some nonsense-talking Democratic Socialist and you prefer the expertise of Tucker Carlson or Laura Ingraham on FOX, I hope you will not ignore the grim reality in the actual numbers: Over 90 percent of those infected, hospitalized, and dying from the coronavirus Delta variant are unvaccinated—over 90 percent. People infected by the coronavirus Delta variant may carry 1,000 times—1,000 times—as much virus and for a longer period of time as those who were infected with the original coronavirus. Those infected were more than twice as likely to be hospitalized than those infected by the original coronavirus.

Vaccines still are effective against the Delta variant and coronavirus. But don't believe, if you are unvaccinated, that you are safe around vaccinated people. Early new data shows that fully vaccinated people may be able to spread the Delta variant to others as readily as unvaccinated people.

In fact, it gets down to the very basics: Until America decides to make vaccination part of our survival, we will continue, sadly, to witness infections; hospitalizations; and deaths and, God forbid, more variants.

Leaders in both public and private sectors are stepping up. We should too. People should be tested regularly, if they insist on not being vaccinated, to show that they are not sick and not a danger to others. The COVID vaccines are safe, free, readily available, and almost miraculously effective, and they are the way out of this pandemic.

One more point about COVID protection: Many on the right are spitting mad and filled with feigned confusion about the CDC's new guidance urging people in COVID hotspots to wear masks indoors even if you are vaccinated.

They say: How can we trust an Agency that keeps changing its rules?

Because the virus is changing and the guidance is changing accordingly. The

virus has mutated and gained strength because tens of millions of Americans have refused to wear masks or get vaccinated.

Deliberate distortion and outraged speeches aren't going to stop the virus. If you want to take off the mask for good—and I sure do—if you want your kids to go to school without being burdened by a mask—and I certainly do—we need to tell the truth. Listen to the experts. Get the vaccine. Getting this virus behind us for good is the only way we can reopen America's economy.

In the longer term, the way to remain the world's preeminent economy is to invest in the fundamentals of strong, sustainable growth and shared prosperity.

It is good that the Senate is debating this plan. I hope that it passes this week as soon as possible, as well as our budget resolution. But in the meantime, we cannot ignore that the Nation is still in the throes of a pandemic.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a courtroom. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

(Ms. CANTWELL assumed the Chair.)

(Mr. KING assumed the Chair.)

(Ms. WARREN assumed the Chair.)

(Ms. CANTWELL assumed the Chair.)

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Arizona.

H.R. 3684

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. President, it is my honor and privilege this evening to join with my fellow 9 Senators of the G-10 who have been working together for months now, along with an additional 12 colleagues, who together—the 22 of us Senators—have worked long and hard with each other and with the White House to introduce this evening the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

We know that this has been a long and sometimes difficult process, but we are proud this evening to announce this legislation, and we look forward, very much, to working with our colleagues in a collaborative and open way over the coming days to work

through this historic investment in infrastructure in our country and to come to agreement in the U.S. Senate to move forward with this historic piece of legislation.

Now, I know that many of my colleagues will talk about some of the virtues of the legislation and the great things that it will do for the States that we all are proud to represent, the States that all of us Senators represent across this country. But what I would like to direct my brief remarks to this evening are not the details of this legislative text—though they are significant, and I think they are very meaningful and will have an impact on the daily lives of Americans. What I would like to speak about is the very process.

I know it has been difficult, and I know it has been long, and what I am proud to say is that is what our forefathers intended when they created a system of government that required Republicans and Democrats to come together in a coequal branch of government and work with each other and with the administration to find legislation and solutions that meet the needs of our country, individuals, and families, companies, communities. It is difficult; it is time consuming; and it is exactly what our country insisted and demands of us every single day: to take the time to work with each other to find common ground, to compromise, and to be willing to work with each other—to give a little, to get a little—in order to achieve what is right and what is best for the American people.

I think the process we are embarking on this evening, as we soon will join together with our colleagues of both political parties, representing every State across the country, is an important one, and it sends a message to the individuals across this country and, indeed, to individuals across this world that the U.S. Government can work. It is difficult; it is time consuming; it can be hard; but this very process of finding bipartisan compromise and working together to overcome obstacles to achieve the objectives that the American people are depending upon us to do is the very heart and the very core of why each of us serves in this government, and I, for one—in addition to being tired, I, for one, am incredibly proud of this process. It is why I ran for office, and I believe it is why we have all run for office: to work together to overcome differences, to find solutions, and to make a difference in the lives of the American people.

As we will see in the coming days, as we hear from our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, offering amendments and adjustments to this legislation, and, ultimately, I believe, passing this legislation out of the Senate, with a strong bipartisan record, we will continue to once again demonstrate to our country and to the world that we can, indeed, do our jobs; that we can legislate; that we can work together; and that we can put aside our own political differences for the greater good of our country.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

H.R. 3684

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I concur with the comments of my colleague from Arizona. She put it well.

This is a really important bill because it takes our aging and outdated infrastructure in this country and modernizes it, and that is good for everybody. It is good for the truckdriver who can leave home, knowing he is going to be safer on our roads and bridges. It is good for the mom who commutes to work and is sick of waiting in rush-hour traffic on the way to work and on the way back because she would rather spend more time with her kids. It is good for the factory worker in Ohio who makes things that need to be transported. We make tanks in Ohio; we make cars in Ohio; we make washing machines. They go all over the world. Our ports—our land ports and our seaports—are inefficient and backed up. It is good for our consumers who are waiting for products from all over the world because our ports are backed up.

Our infrastructure is way behind, and we will talk a lot more about that over the next couple of days with some very specific data as to how we have fallen behind, how we are not competitive anymore, how China has surpassed us in terms of infrastructure. As a percent of their economy, they spend about four times more than we do. Why? Because they get it. This helps make the economy more efficient, more productive, and, therefore, it actually returns an investment to the American people.

We are also going to hear about how it is not going to increase inflation like some of the other spending that is being talked about around here, partly because it is long-term spending for capital assets. It is spending that is going to add to the supply side, meaning it is actually going to be counter-inflationary and create more jobs. We hear all about that, but one thing that I do want to make sure that we hear about tonight is the fact that this process of starting from the center out has worked.

People have talked about infrastructure in this city forever. President Trump had a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure package. Ours is \$550 billion, by the way. Five percent of his was paid for. Ours is paid for. We made a commitment early on that we were going to do two things: One, we were going to focus on core infrastructure. So, when President Biden introduced a \$2.65 trillion bill and called it infrastructure, we said: Well, there is some good stuff in there, but let's pull out the good stuff, the core infrastructure because a lot of it had nothing to do with infrastructure. And, second, we said: You know what? We are not going to do it by raising taxes. We are not going to hurt the American worker more and make

America less competitive in this; we are going to do just the opposite.

We kept to those two principles, and I am so proud of that; that tonight we can say the amendment, the substitute amendment, is going to be offered, and it is going to keep to that commitment of \$555 billion—no new taxes, core infrastructure only—and it is great for the American people.

I want to thank a few people who got us here who are going to be able, over the next few days, to tell us in great detail of the role they played because it was significant on every one of their parts.

First, of course, Senator SINEMA; she has been the one who has kept us on track, and that has been very important, but also to my colleagues who are here tonight on the floor, Senator SUSAN COLLINS, Senator LISA MURKOWSKI, Senator MITT ROMNEY, Senator BILL CASSIDY—my Republican colleagues whom we have worked with over the last 4 months—and each has made huge contributions to this.

I want to thank the White House for their work with us because they said early on: OK. We want to do this, too, in a bipartisan way.

We said: OK. If you are serious, we do too.

And, sure enough, we negotiated. It was tough, and we had a lot of differences, but we were able to get to this point tonight.

Just as important is the group on the other side of the aisle who made this work, and I see my colleague Senator MANCHIN here. I see Senator WARNER here. It looks like he really wants to speak. I see Senator SHAHEEN here, who is about to speak, and I see Senator TESTER wandering around here somewhere. These are the folks on the other side of the so-called G-10 who made it happen.

And then a much bigger group. So to my colleagues who also helped in the 22 working groups we had in putting this together and did such a great job, RICHARD BURR, LINDSEY GRAHAM, MIKE ROUNDS, THOM TILLIS, JERRY MORAN, CHRIS COONS, MAGGIE HASSAN, JOHN HICKENLOOPER, MARK KELLY, ANGUS KING, JACKY ROSEN—11 Democrats and 11 Republicans.

And then, to my friends who took us over the top the other night on the first vote we had on this, I appreciate them because they were not involved as much on the details, but they know this is the right thing for the country, and many of them did help to get us where we are: KEVIN CRAMER, MIKE CRAPO, MITCH MCCONNELL, ROY BLUNT, CHUCK GRASSLEY, JOHN HOEVEN, JIM RISCH.

Folks, we wouldn't be here without every one of them, and we thank all of the folks who have put so much time and effort into this.

And, mostly, we got to thank our staffs because none of us would be here standing tonight, doing this, if we didn't have staff who had been working their hearts out, staying here until 12